

Message Text

SECRET

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DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:LMACFARLANE
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 181231 TOSEC 190017

NODIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE DTD 220940Z JUL 76

QUOTE CAIRO 9876

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AEMR, US, LE
SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION

DEPT PASS SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 181222 (TOSEC 190013)

1. SINCE BOTH SADAT AND FAHMY ARE STILL IN ALEXANDRIA,
I MET WITH MUHAMMED RIAD AS SOON AS HE GOT INTO THE
OFFICE THIS MORNING TO GIVE HIM PRESIDENT FORD'S MESSAGE
TO PRESIDENT SADAT ON THE BEIRUT EVACUATION. I ASKED
THAT HE GET IT TO SADAT IMMEDIATELY.

2. AFTER READING THE MESSAGE, RIAD SAID HE WISHED TO
MAKE ONE OBSERVATION. SEELYE HAD TOLD METWALLI ABOUT
THE PLO'S REFUSAL TO GUARANTEE THE JULY 21 CONVOY.

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UPON CHECKING WITH PLO, METWALLI HAD CONCLUDED THAT PLO

GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE SECURITY OF THE NABATIYA AREA AND HAD SO REPORTED TO GOE. I POINTED OUT TO RIAD THAT WHAT WE ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT IS SOMETHING THAT HAS COME UP SINCE THAT TIME. WHEN PLO SECURITY REP TOLD EMBASSY BEIRUT SECURITY REP THAT JULY 21 CONVOY COULD NOT BE GUARANTEED BECAUSE OF INSECURITY IN NABATIYA AREA, HE HAD ADDED THIS SHOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF IN TWO OR THREE DAYS. ON BASIS OF THIS STATEMENT, WE HAD RESCHEDULED CONVOY FOR JUNE 24, I.E. , THREE DAYS LATER. IN A TALK WITH PLO REP HELD YESTERDAY TO CONFIRM JUNE 24 CONVOY, PLO HAD REFUSED TO GUARANTEE CONVOY, GIVING AS ALLEGED REASONS THE POINTS MADE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL LETTER. NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID ABOUT INSECURITY AT NABATIYA. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AMBASSADOR SEELYE HAD CONCLUDED THAT PLO IN EFFECT HOLDING CONVOY AS HOSTAGE. HENCE, THE PRESIDENTIAL LETTER I HAD JUST GIVEN HIM. I EMPHASIZED TO RIAD THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE VIEW THIS PROBLEM AND THAT WE LOOK TO OUR EGYPTIAN FRIENDS TO DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO HELP US RESOLVE IT.

3. RIAD INDICATED HE APPRECIATED SITUATION. HE EXPECTS FAHMY IN ABOUT ONE HOUR'S TIME AND WILL SHOW THE LETTER TO FAHMY AS SOON AS LETTER ARRIVES. HE ASSUMES FAHMY WILL AT ONCE GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PRESIDENT, HOPEFULLY BEFORE SADAT'S DEPARTURE FROM ALEXANDRIA, TO CONVEY THE LETTER AND TO TAKE INSTRUCTIONS ON WHAT THE PRESIDENT WANTS DONE. RIAD SAID WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL ACT. SADAT HIMSELF IS EXPECTED BACK IN CAIRO SOMETIME IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON. EILTS UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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